

FEBRUARY NEWS



FROM THE MODERATOR



According to Luke (9: 51) Jesus 'set his face' (other translations: 'resolutely set out') for Jerusalem, even though he knew what would happen there. That journey from Galilee to the Holy City is part of what we mark in Lent (which begins on 17 February).

It is almost a year since we embarked upon the Covid-19 restrictions. Some people have learned new skills: uploading video clips to Facebook or YouTube, operating Zoom meetings, or engaging with the community in new ways. Some have found it a long hard slog: trying to keep a congregation together, offering pastoral care, coping with office-bearers shielding, struggling with buildings and finance, having to take hard decisions, and finding that in some quarters there is apathy or depression. When will it all end? Will we go back to something we recognise, or will the future be very different?

This is a good time to remind ourselves that Jesus 'set his face' to go to Jerusalem. He was under no illusions about what lay ahead, but wasn't put off by it, because he could see what lay beyond. As we approach the first anniversary of restrictions, we know that from his own experience our God understands what pain, stress and anxiety are like. We also know that he walks with us on our journey, and we know that as he rose in triumph and now sits enthroned in glory, so he has promised us that if we travel the road with him, then we too shall share in his glorious triumph.

NEW PRESBYTERY CLERK

Rev Dr Peter McEnhill started as Presbytery Clerk on 1st January 2021 and has already begun working in a number of key areas. His normal hours of work will be 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and he can be contacted at that time on 07837729333. He will also be available outwith those hours to deal with urgent situations which may arise. Both the Clerk and Secretary continue to work from home in line with Covid guidelines.



In a piece on Presbytery Reform requested by the Comms department at 121, the Clerk wrote- 'Clyde Presbytery is still very much a work in progress. The focus is upon mission in response to the challenges of an increasingly secular society. Reform is paradoxically about getting bigger to get closer to the ground. Big enough for resources to be devolved so that meaningful decisions can be taken closer to the local context. Resourcing the local church so that worshipping communities are freed to focus on witnessing and serving their communities in the name of Christ is the goal. Presbytery will be more fleet of foot and supple in its response. Fashioning the new shape of the church for the 21st century by letting go of some of the old patterns that have served us so faithfully in the past. The work will require wisdom and discernment and not a little pastoral sensitivity, but there is much enthusiasm for the task – and a great sense that God is doing a new thing in our midst.'

MISSION COMMITTEE



We wrote to each congregation in November seeking nominations from each congregation to serve on **Local Mission Groups**, while I appreciate that we were preparing for Advent etc., the number of nominations received has been extremely disappointing. Only 3 of the 9 LMG's have managed to get representatives and have met to start exploring what is happening in each congregation and local area, and where they could work in collaboration.

It was not the Mission committee who decided on this model for mission, rather it was Presbytery, I therefore ask you to please consider representation from your congregation and inform the LMG convenors for your area of that person's details, to allow them to arrange initial meetings for your area.

We received good feedback for the resources page which we set up on the Presbytery website for Advent/Christmas, and we are hoping to do the same again for Lent/Easter resources. To enable this to happen can you please forward any ideas/resources you are planning to use or other sources you have found useful to me (gnoonan@churchofscotland.org.uk) not later than Sunday 14 February and we will create a resource area on the Presbytery website.

The committee have met with Faith in Community Scotland and we are exploring ways that we could work together with LMG's to assist with community modelling etc., we will share more information regarding this as it develops.
Revd. Gary Noonan – Mission Convenor

MINISTRIES

Ministries Committee have met on several occasions via Zoom and have started to look at the various forms of ministry delivered within the new Presbytery of Clyde and to identify where we can support, encourage and facilitate FT Ministers, OLMs, Auxiliary Ministry, Readers, Diaconate, Worship Leaders and all associated with providing services of worship particularly in these very difficult times. One area we have been encouraged by is the 6 Ministry Candidates who are at various stages of their training and are currently in placements throughout the Presbytery.

A zoom meeting was hosted mid-December and several members of the Ministries Committee met online with the Candidates and our guest the Moderator - Ian Johnstone. This allowed the candidates the opportunity to introduce themselves and give a little of their background and Calling as well as identifying concerns as they progress through their training most of which has been online or limited by the restrictions.

This meeting was well received and for some of the students the first time they had spoken directly to each other and has subsequently led to further online gatherings to support each other.

Presbytery have also recognised the financial implications on the students and a small grant was awarded to each of our students, to buy books or other necessary materials that they may require as part their ongoing studies. Again, this was most appreciated by the Candidates.

As a Committee we will continue to offer and give support to the Candidates in training and can we ask that each member of the Presbytery remembers them in their prayers.

Our students are - Mr Thorsten Koenig, Mr Dougie Adam, Mr Aaron Marshall, Mr Alex MacCallum, Ms Adaeze Goziem-Ibonye, Mr Stephen Henderson. *Yvonne Smith, Ministries Convenor*

LOCAL CHURCH REVIEW

Local Church Review is a phrase that has been around the Church of Scotland for 10 years now, and yet in many presbyteries (including the previous Dumbarton and Greenock & Paisley) it has not really become embedded in normal practice.

Many people have seen it as a 'like for like' replacement of the old quinquennial inspections and that is, in my opinion, unfortunate. While a report on property is a requirement of the overall review, in Clyde we have agreed with the Property team that they will look after that section – joined up thinking rather than repeating ourselves! The Clyde presbytery LCR team have had some zoom chat and some email exchanges over these past difficult months and we are unanimous in our hope that we can make LCR an enjoyable and positive experience for congregations. We intend to focus on an action planning process that will involve as many in the congregation as wish to participate and we hope to work with you to find your strengths and help you to build on them, and if there are any areas where you're not quite as strong then we hope to be able to help you find a way to address these too. However, one thing is clear – we can't realistically do this over zoom and we can't hope to find a way forward into the future when none of us really know where we are at the moment. COVID-19 has brought much change and uncertainty to many of us and the LCR team has no desire to increase anyone's workload or anxiety. We will be in touch once we have a clearer vision of a post-pandemic world!

In the meantime, however, we are also aware that there are aspects of these lockdown restrictions that are more difficult for some congregations than for others. If you would like to have a discussion with the LCR team about any of the challenges you feel you are facing at the moment in an attempt to find improved solutions, we will be more than happy to help – just drop me an email!

Christine Cavanagh, Convenor

PROPERTY

Looking Forward

Perhaps it is true that only fools try to look ahead during a global pandemic but still we will try and give some indication of where things might be headed. Recently, the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland have been doing a lot of forward thinking about buildings within the life of the Church. This is rightly a delicate and sensitive subject, which can arouse strong and understandable feeling. Yet at the same time, the Kirk has to think seriously about how we align our buildings with our mission. For those interested in this and how this thinking is developing, we would commend this 2020 General Assembly speech from the General Trustees which is available from this [link](#) and this [summary](#) of what was agreed at GA 2020 (with gratitude to John Christie for preparing it). It is an interesting read and these threads are likely to inform the way that Presbytery of Clyde develops over the years that lie ahead. For those wishing a more detailed treatment of this subject, the full report of the General Trustees on their theme of “well-equipped spaces in the right place is available at this [link](#).

Presbytery Spending Limits and Permissions

We would like to draw your attention to the statement about spending limits and permissions which is contained in the Presbytery Handbook, which can be found in section 59 on page 39. For those congregations to the south of the river, this presents no change. But for those north of the river, what we now have is a simpler approach to spending limits and permission which simply says that “*A congregational Financial Board may carry out repairs with a cumulative value up to £20,000, inclusive of VAT and professional fees in any one calendar year without the approval of the Presbytery. Repairs which exceed the Financial Limit require the prior approval of the Presbytery and the General Trustees. All Alterations require the prior approval of the Presbytery and the General Trustees.*”

A Very Basic Guide to Obtaining Grant Funding

As we consider our buildings in terms of being “well equipped spaces in the right places”, the question of how to finance repairs and alterations to buildings remains a major question for many congregations. One positive thing that every congregation can do is be aware that there are a large number of possible sources for grant funding – and the beauty of a grant is that you do not have to pay it back. It is quite possible with a modest amount of effort in advance planning, research and writing to raise a significant proportion of the costs of a property project directly from grants. There is no hard and fast list of grant awarding bodies, because this will vary very much depending on what the project is. But here, nevertheless are some brief practical tips, followed by some suggestions about specific Trusts and Bequests who might have money available for your project.

Practical Tips and Advice

- The first step is do some hard yards in researching which grant award bodies have award criteria into which your project easily fits. Competition for grants is stiff, so unless you can write a strong case which speaks directly to the award criteria of the funder, you are in danger of wasting time.
- Second, pay careful attention to the award criteria. Make your case systemically, by ticking off the points that speak to the criteria. If photos are asked for, then include photos, if community use of the building is important to grant funder, then make sure to address community use of the building in your application.
- Almost always, the grant funder looks for an outline budget and will be looking for your contribution to the project. This is taken as a measure of your commitment to ‘see it through’. But they are also interested in situations where there is a budget shortfall and where their funding can make a real difference in a particular situation. So, if for example you have £10k available for a £20k project, you are in a good position to raise money from grants.
- The vast majority of applications must be made before the work starts. So, applying for grants cannot be done at the last minute or in case of emergency unless the fund permits it.

Some Specific Sources of Funding

Here is a [link](#) to a Church of Scotland document which contains much more information about obtaining grant funding. But as a Presbytery we would encourage congregations to be aware of the potential of the following grant awarding bodies, because they have a West of Scotland locus, are (with one exception) targeted toward churches and also because the application process is relatively straightforward:

The Baird Trust

The Bellahouston Fund

The Ferguson Bequest

The Robertson Trust (wider remit than churches)

In addition to these we would also like to draw attention to the following national funders:

All Churches Trust
National Churches Foundation
The Rank Foundation
The Garfield Weston Foundation
The Joseph Rank Trust

Undoubtedly there will be possible funders missing from this list and so there is no substitute for doing the hard research yards with particular reference to your local context; but the above list remains a fair start. And as we, as a Presbytery, look to maintain, equip and develop our buildings for our mission in the years ahead, it would good indeed for us to make best use of grant funding as a means to make this happen.

Ian McEwan (Convener), Douglas Thomson (Vice-Convener for north of the river)

Ian Russell (Vice-Convener for south of the river)

VACANCY PROCEDURE

Two vacancies have been filled since our last newsletter, Matthew Ritchie inducted to Neilston and David Hood inducted to Paisley South. The committee look forward to being involved in the remaining vacancies within Clyde Presbytery when the time is right.

GOOD NEWS STORIES

Bridge of Weir- St Machar's Ranfurly Church

In November in collaboration with Freeland Church and St Mary's Episcopal Church we produced an online advent calendar for the village. Daily videos were posted to a dedicated Facebook and YouTube channel with either a hymn/carol, a short message, photos or even some instruction/craft videos (e.g. make a Christingle, an advent wreath). People were encouraged to sign up/subscribe and share on their own social media. More than a 100 people from the congregations signed up to receive a daily email with direct link to the videos.

There was very positive feedback and people said they loved the collaboration – seeing lots of different people involved in the making of the videos. Most videos had between 100-200 views each on both Facebook and YouTube. We are currently pondering if there is something online we could do for Lent/Easter, although my personal enthusiasm is currently slightly tempered by home-schooling realities!

Revd. Hanneke Marshall

Houston and Killellan Kirk

At an award ceremony on 11 December Volunteers from Houston and Killellan Kirk celebrated winning the Marsh Church and Community Heroes Awards 2020. The award was presented at the National Churches Trust's Local Treasures event.

Along with seven other churches across the UK, the volunteers at the kirk have been recognised for their help, kindness and support to local people and communities through this difficult year. Supported by

the Marsh Christian Trust the Awards are a celebration of their selfless contributions.

New Kilpatrick: Bearsden

Instead of our usual 'gift Sunday' we had heard that one of the poorer stocked items at our local foodbanks were baby items. Under the banner 'Preparing for a Baby' which was our Christmas theme anyway, we invited financial donations so that huge piles of nappies and boxes of food would not take up huge amounts of room. Instead, we worked with our partners so that we would be able to supply baby items for families from funds whenever they might be needed over Christmas. This was meant to cover only December and perhaps into the New Year. However, we are now able to work with three foodbanks for the whole of this year to supply baby clothes, food and nappies etc.



Do you have a “good news” story to share? Let Gary Noonan know so that good ideas can be shared across Clyde Presbytery.